

31st Fighter Wing: The U.S. Air Force's fighter wing south of the Alps

THE VIGILEER

Vol. 52 No. 17

May 5, 2006

Aviano Air Base, Italy

Fly Bys

Office closure

Pass and Registration will be closed Monday. Customers with appointments will be seen; however, no walk-in services are available. Call Tech. Sgt. Angela Palazzo at Ext. 4858 for more information.

CDC registration

Registration for the part day enrichment program for 3- to 5-year olds is from 1 to 4:30 p.m. May 18 and 19 at the flightline child development center. Registration is first-come, first-served and parents must bring current shot records and a \$50 deposit. Call the CDC at Ext. 5199 for additional information.

Trial shuttle bus

A trial shuttle has been implemented to help with lunchtime traffic. The white shuttle will operate from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the flightline area only. The shuttle runs four times in the opposite direction of the red and blue shuttles and is scheduled for 30-minute round-trip increments. This allows personnel who eat at the dining facility enough time to leave work, eat lunch and return to work in one hour. Call vehicle operations at Ext. 7666 for details.



Photo by Airman Liliana Moreno

Maj. Marlene Kerchenski, 31st Medical Group, left, evaluates the treatment of casualties during the Combat Medical Readiness Training April 27 in Area D. The readiness training prepares medical personnel for deployed situations and rapid response in any emergency situation.

Aviano medics train for any situation

By Tech. Sgt. Jerome Baysmore
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Part of Area D was transformed into a field hospital last week by the 31st Medical Group Medical Readiness Flight. Officials used the area to conduct a two-day Continual Medical Readiness Training course.

"This is a great teaching tool," said Master Sgt. Robert Velez, medical readiness flight NCOIC. "We take them to the field and give them experience and training to give them a better feel for the job instead of 'death by PowerPoint.'"

See Medical, page 5

Spouse It Up: The next Spouse It Up event is at 10:30 a.m. May 17 in Area D with a Cinco De Mayo theme. Call Ext. 5407 for details.

31st FW Sortie Board

sortie: n, a flight of a combat aircraft on a mission

	Hours	Sorties
31st FW goal	112.0	72
	+9.8	+9

Information current as of Thursday.



Family fun

Aviano celebrated 'Month of the Military Child' with dances and fun activities at its eighth annual Family Fair Saturday.

- Pages 10-11



Island hop

Lake Bled is home to Slovenia's only island, a good luck wishing bell and world-famous cream cakes.

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From the top: A Word From Those Who Lead

U.S. Air Force

Letter to Airmen: Advanced education

To all United States Air Force Officers, since our birth as an Air Force in 1947, we have continually adapted and evolved - providing our nation with the most lethal and capable force possible. The challenges of today and tomorrow demand we continue to improve. We are transforming our processes, streamlining our organizations, recapitalizing our systems and improving the capabilities of our people. These changes will ensure success in defending our nation and her global interests.

A key component of our evolution is the more deliberate development of our most important weapon system - our Airmen. In a smaller, leaner and more expeditionary focused Air Force, it is essential that our Airmen have the knowledge and competency to accomplish our mission.

As we continue to fight this Global War on Terror, we will be conducting operations in both familiar and unfamiliar places, with both old and new friends. To succeed, our expeditionary Air Force will need all the cultural, political, and technical skills available. One of the most effective ways to develop this knowledge is through advanced education. However, we have all seen how this intent can be misunderstood. Over time, earning a post-graduate degree deteriorated into a method to increase the likelihood of promotion.

People used their education benefits and precious free time to pursue degrees that may or may not have been relevant to their Air Force duties. So, to discourage such activity, information regarding advanced degrees was masked from central promotion boards.

This had two effects. As intended, people

“To succeed, our expeditionary Air Force will need all the cultural, political, and technical skills available.”

- Michael W. Wynne,
Secretary of the Air Force and
General T. Michael Moseley,
U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff

stopped “square filling.” Unfortunately, many others stopped pursuing degrees that would have benefited themselves and the Air Force. And, we made it impossible for boards to see all that you have accomplished and your full potential.

Both of us want to encourage Airmen, not discourage them, from pursuing advanced education. Therefore, we want a change to the officer promotion process that would again provide supervisors, commanders and selection boards information on all academic degrees earned.

Beginning with the calendar year 2008 central selection boards, information on all degrees earned by an officer will be available to the board. If you choose to complete an advanced degree, this timetable will give you almost two years to complete a degree before this policy is implemented.

We have the greatest air and space force the world has ever known. The challenges we face will demand our utmost determination, and all the intellectual “throw weight” we can muster. This policy will help ensure we are equal to the task.

Together we will win the War on Terror and continue our proud heritage of defending this great republic.


Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force


T. MICHAEL MOSELEY
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

Aviano Airman of the Week

Name: Airman 1st Class James McPhee

Unit: 31st Security Forces Squadron

Job: Exclusion area entry controller

Hometown: Natick, Mass.

Family: Mom, Charm; Father, George; Sister, Erin

Hobbies: Volleyball, reading Tom Clancy novels, volunteering and singing

Why joined: Continuing our family tradition by serving my country and gaining quality life experiences



Pet safety: Aviano, Italian vets team up to solve mystery

By Capt. Eric Lombardini
Southern Europe
Veterinary Detachment

Over the past three years, a few dogs have come into the veterinary clinic with strange lesions. Both the owners and I were baffled. The dogs' tongues were ulcerated and bleeding on the sides closest to the teeth. In some cases, their throats were also heavily swollen.

A veterinarian's first reaction in a presentation such as this is that the dog bit into an electrical cord, and that the resultant swelling and dead tissue was due to the sparking of electricity and the subsequent burn.

Another option was that the dogs had gotten into something toxic, such as battery acid. What was puzzling was the fact that the dogs were often otherwise completely normal.



Courtesy photo

The *Traumatocampa Pityocampa* moth produces these caterpillars, which have spines that can get stuck in dogs' tongues and throat. The hairs cause an allergic reaction in the dogs.

There was obviously an unwillingness to eat, but there were no signs of overall intoxication.

Just a couple of days ago, a puppy was brought to the clinic with the same signs. The poor thing was weak from not eating, and the sides of the tongue were black from the dead tissue. After running a series of quick diagnostics, including x-rays, the puppy was referred to Dr. Stephano

Candotti's clinic in Cordeons for overnight supportive care.

Together, Dr. Candotti and I mulled over the possibilities, and finally, through a roundtable discussion with two of his colleagues, arrived at the culprit.

Traumatocampa pityocampa is the pine procession moth, a small non-descript gray moth which is very common to this area. The moth lays its eggs in pine cones and, as the larvae hatch, they spin webs and grow larger as they eat vegetation.

The moth itself is completely harmless to animals; however, it is the caterpillars that come out in huge numbers from their web-like nests in the spring which are the problem. The spines or hairs of the caterpillar get stuck in the dogs' tongues and throat when the dog licks or bites down on the insect.

Under a microscope, the

hairs have a harpoon appearance and latch into the tissue once impaled. The dog's immune system takes over and a massive localized allergic reaction causes the tissue to become inflamed and eventually die in the parts of the tongue where the hairs are stuck.

Once this happens, the only thing the veterinarian can do is treat the animal with steroids to decrease the inflammation, antibiotics to ward off a bacterial infection and give soft food and fluids to help the dog stay hydrated. Then it's just a waiting game.

So, mystery solved for us, but it remains a danger and yet another reason to be vigilant about what your cat or dog is getting into when he or she is out of sight. It's caterpillar season ... do you know where your dog is?

For more information on how to protect your pet, call the Aviano vet clinic at Ext. 4498.

Power of Presence: Share career milestones with the new Power of Presence Web site at www.usafe.af.mil/pop. Call Ext. 7344 for details.

Medical, from page 1

Participants received real-world instruction in providing medical care under field conditions. Officials said continual training is important to meet the challenges of medical care during wartime, natural disasters or emergencies.

"Without this training, I wouldn't know what to do," said Senior Airman Ryan Rubino, 31st Aerospace Medicine Squadron medical technician. "With this training, I'm pretty set."

Col. Michael Schaffrinna, 31st Medical Group commander, said success favors those who are prepared. He added that each medic will go through the training to be prepared to deploy downrange or in defense of the homeland.

"Being ready does not mean preparing two weeks prior to a deployment — it begins upon entry into the service," he said. "The medics are here to deliver healthcare to patients in a safe environment but to do so, you need to train annually and monthly."

Tech. Sgt. Donald McCoy, 31st MDG unit deployment manager, noted the real-world training scenarios as well as the rain during the training course were beneficial.

"Things aren't always sunny in the Air Force like most people think they are," he said. "This training prepares the medics for contingencies in a real-world environment where they may be dealing with one or potentially a multitude of casualties."

The scenarios ensured care providers triaged their patients correctly when faced with multiple casualties and determined how and where to evacuate them, when necessary.

"The course was designed to drill the medics under different



Photo by Airman Liliana Moreno

Capt. Karen Lugg, 31st Medical Operations Squadron, left, and Staff Sgt. Qiana Dixon, 31st Medical Group, right, conduct a buddy check during the CMRT.

situations," Sergeant McCoy added. "It taught medics how to transport patients over obstacles or through rough terrain."

CMRT also incorporated scenarios which replicated the pressures of the battlefield and provided a setting for medical professionals to treat patients while protecting themselves from enemy action.

Airmen participate in Wingman Day events

Squadrons have informal group sessions to discuss emotionally charged topics, build team support

By Senior Airman Sarah Gregory
31st Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

Sexual assault, drinking and driving and suicide are, for some, uncomfortable topics, but they were the focus of group discussions during Aviano's Wingman Day Monday.

"It's important that we talk about these things because it's better to break the ice when someone's life is not in danger," said Lt. Col. Todd Phinney, 31st Fighter Wing chief of safety, who compared it to talking about drugs with your children.

Beginning with a mandatory briefing for all 31st Fighter Wing Airmen at Hangar One and continuing on into individual squadron events, the Wingman Day theme was all about safety.

"We wanted to take a pause from our busy daily routines and focus on our wingman program and what could be done to improve it," said Colonel Phinney.

"Some of the issues we're facing are trends and this was a chance for all of us to stop and concentrate on them."

At the two mass briefings, the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator and safety representatives spoke, reminding Airmen of their purpose. Senior Airman Dominick Griego, 31st Logistics Readiness Squadron, also spoke about his own difficulties with alcohol and how he dealt with his addiction with the help of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevent and Treatment program.

After the morning briefing, Airmen were released to their individual squadrons for informal discussions and group activities. To tackle some of the more difficult topics, the 31st Communications Squadron broke down into small groups, allowing Airmen to share their experiences and viewpoints on a more personal level.

"This makes people more aware of the issues they could encounter on a



Photo by Senior Airman Sarah Gregory

Members of the 31st Communications Squadron get together to play board games and group sports during Aviano's Wingman Day Monday.

day-to-day basis and helps them come up with ways to handle problems before they are actually in the middle of them," said Master Sgt. Bob Regan, 31st CS base systems chief. "Our end goal is to make us a more effective Air Force and, by being better wingmen, we can accomplish that."

The groups also talked about different scenarios that resulted in sexual assault and what could have been done to prevent it.

"The wingman concept really comes alive in the

small group setting," said Colonel Phinney. "It gives people a chance to talk about emergency types of situations, with all the time in the world, and how to formulate a game plan."

In addition to rehearsing scenarios, squadrons participated in group sports and team-building activities.

"We're doing things like intra-flight volleyball games to strengthen our camaraderie and esprit de corps," said Chief Master Sgt. Mervin Morris, 31st Maintenance Squadron first sergeant.

Legal services: The legal office will not offer legal assistance, notaries or powers of attorney today due to an official function.

Chief McKinley selected as 15th CMSAF

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley has named Chief Master Sgt. Rodney J. McKinley to serve as the 15th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. Chief McKinley will assume his new position July 1, following the June 30 retirement of Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald R. Murray. Chief Murray's retirement culminates 29 years of service to the Air Force.

"I'm excited to have Chief McKinley take the helm of our enlisted force," General Moseley said. "Chief McKinley is a tremendous leader with an impressive array of expeditionary and combat experiences to help him steer our Airmen and serve as my partner. We were blessed to have a number of exceptionally well-qualified candidates for the position. While the decision was not an easy one, I feel we have the right person to lead our enlisted force during this time of a long war on terrorism, recapitalization and transformation. I look forward to working with him."

Chief McKinley is currently the command chief master ser-

geant for Pacific Air Forces. He originally joined the Air Force in 1974, took a break in service in 1977, attended college and re-entered the Air Force in 1982.

Chief McKinley's career includes assignments in the medical, aircraft maintenance and first sergeant fields. He has also served as the command chief master sergeant of the 86th Airlift Wing at Ramstein Air Base, Germany; 1st Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base, Va.; 379th Air Expeditionary Wing in Southwest Asia; and 11th Air Force at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

The office of the chief master sergeant of the Air Force represents the highest enlisted level of leadership, provides direction for the enlisted corps and represents their interests to the American public and all levels of government. The chief master sergeant of the Air Force serves as a personal adviser to the Air Force chief of staff and secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, proper utilization and progress of the enlisted force and their families. (Courtesy of Air Force Print News)

Air Force automates training records process

By Phil Berube

Air University Public Affairs

Airmen in logistics career fields soon will have access to an online tool that takes training records out of a desk drawer and makes them available through a desktop computer.

The automated training records and management application, called Training Business Area, on the Air Force Portal, will replace the need to file and maintain paper copies of the AF Form 623, On-The-Job Training Record.

The initial version of TBA is projected to support the training of more than 200,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian personnel.

The TBA application will give supervisors access to virtual training products, such as career field education and training plans and Air Force job qualification standards. They will be able to create individual training plans, document upgrade training and accomplish other related actions they now do with paper and pencil.

The intent of TBA is to keep warfighters in the fight and not bogged down with paperwork.

"TBA will save warfighters thousands of

hours in documenting, managing, completing and transcribing training actions," said Master Sgt. Cynthia Kaelin, 754th Electronics Systems Group, Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, Ala. "Another huge benefit is that supervisors will get near real-time access to revised (career field education and training plans) from career field managers."

Supervisors will appreciate not having to transcribe paper copies of revised CFETPs, said Chief Master Sgt. Ellsworth Brown, the Air Force career field manager for aircraft maintenance systems specialties. "This single capability is priceless," he said.

Once operational, TBA will allow career field managers, major command functional managers, "schoolhouse" training managers and subject-matter experts to expedite CFETP revisions during utilization and training workshops, Chief Brown said.

"Once this group finalizes revisions to a CFETP, the (career field manager) can quickly gain publication approval and push the new change electronically Air Force-wide to everyone loaded into TBA for that particular (plan). The end of transcribing training records is near," he said.

Supervisors and trainees in the field will gain the most from TBA, Chief Brown said.

Among its many features, TBA will al-

low supervisors to develop virtual master and individual training plans that can incorporate efficiencies from other Air Force specialties loaded in TBA.

"For instance, workcenter supervisors can add tasks from other specialties that apply to their workcenters without having to develop an AF Form 797 (Job Qualification Standard Continuation/Command JQS)," Chief Brown said.

"All technical references assigned to those tasks will flow with it. Trainees will now have access to their individual training requirements anytime through the Air Force Portal, enabling Airmen to play a more proactive role in their training and career development," Chief Brown said.

Creating automated training documents is only a hint of TBA's potential, Sergeant Kaelin said.

"We envision TBA's capability to extend to forecasting and tracking completion of formal training schools and managing career development courses and skill-level and upgrade training or just about any other action that has to do with training Airmen," she said.

Initial field testing of TBA is scheduled to start mid-year, followed by worldwide release this fall.

Scholarship: A new scholarship for dependents and spouses is available at <http://www.thanksusa.org>. Applications are due by May 30.

Night driving safety tips

According to the National Safety Council, traffic death rates are three times greater at night than during the day. Despite the increased risks, many people are unaware of night driving's special hazards or don't know effective ways to deal with them.

Ninety percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is severely limited at night. Depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision are compromised after sundown.

Here are several measures drivers can take to minimize these after-dark dangers:

- Prepare your car for night driving. Clean headlights, taillights, signal lights and windows once a week, more often if necessary.
- Have headlights properly aimed. Misaimed headlights blind other drivers and reduces your ability to see.
- Avoid smoking when driving. Nicotine and carbon monoxide hamper night vision.
- Turn your headlights on. Lights will not help you see better in early twilight, but they'll make it easier for other drivers to see you. Being seen is as important as seeing.
- If an oncoming vehicle doesn't lower beams from high to low, avoid glare by watching the right edge of the road and using it as a steering guide.
- Observe night driving safety as soon as the sun goes down. Twilight is one of the most difficult times to drive, because your eyes are constantly changing to adapt to the growing darkness.



Courtesy photo

Off-roading

While photos like this may seem funny, the results of driving while drowsy or under the influence of alcohol are not. According to the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety, 42,636 people died in motor vehicle crashes in 2004. Alcohol severely impairs driving ability and acts as a depressant. Just one drink can induce fatigue. Just like alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness and impairs judgment and can be fatal when driving. The symptoms of fatigue include eyes closing or going out of focus, persistent yawning, wandering or disconnected thoughts, the inability to remember driving the last few miles and drifting between lanes or onto shoulder. When the signs of fatigue begin to show, get off the road. Take a short nap in a well-lit area. Do not simply stop on the side of the road.

Aviano's Eighth Annual Family Fair

Hangar One was filled with singers and dancers, jail cells and four-legged friends as the Aviano community came together for the eighth annual Family Fair Saturday. Various base organizations provided informational booths and activities, highlighting April's 'Month of the Military Child' theme.



Third-year American Idol contestant George Huff performs for the crowd at the Aviano Family Fair Saturday.



Army Staff Sgt. Nelson Jeffery, 99th Transportation Detachment, is stuck in jail. Soldiers paid \$1 per minute to put their first sergeant in jail. The jail was a fundraiser for the 31st Security Forces Squadron Defenders' Council Christmas party.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Bethann Caporaletti

Mem
annu
group



Staff
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Members of the Aviano's Youth Programs Dance Club perform during the family fair at Hangar One Saturday. The family fair celebrated Month of the Military Child and featured informational booths, performances by children's groups and family and children-oriented activities.



Sgt. Justin Devaney, 31st Security Forces Squadron, and his military working dog, Nico, demonstrate how MWDs can detect explosives and drugs in suitcases.



Kelsey Jones, daughter of Senior Airman Steve Rietz, 31st Communications Squadron, gets her face painted by Elaine LaJeunesse, a civilian employee with the 31st Mission Support Squadron.

Family night

The La Bella Vista Club is hosting a family night for club members at 5 p.m. Tuesday. The cost is \$5 and children under 12 eat free. For more information, call Ext. 4303.

Cinco De Mayo

The La Bella Vista Club is celebrating Cinco De Mayo at 5:30 p.m. today with music, a salsa cook-off competition and door prizes. Food includes fajita, nacho and taco stations and beverage stations. The club will also have an After Hours Fiesta at 10 p.m. tonight. These "adults only" events are for club members and one authorized guest. The cost is \$5 for each event. For more information, call Ext. 4303.

Babysitter training

The American Red Cross is offering babysitters training for 11-to-15 year olds from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The training covers care-giving, decision-making, safety and first aid, preventing and responding to emergencies and child and

infant CPR. The cost is \$35. For more information or to sign up, call Ext. 5576.

MASH Bash

The 31st Fighter Wing is hosting a M*A*S*H Bash combat dining out at 6 p.m. May 19 in Hangar One. Tickets cost \$5 for E-1 to E-4, \$15 for E-5 to E-8 and O-1 to O-5 and \$25 for E-9 and O-6. Dress is BDUs, flight suit or MASH garb. For more information or to purchase tickets, call your first sergeant.

School board

The Aviano school advisory board seeks volunteers to serve on next year's board. The board serves as an advisory group to the Department of Defense Dependents Schools Mediterranean District superintendent, school administrations and the base commander. Volunteers serve a two-year term and make a commitment to attend quarterly meetings and planning sessions.

To volunteer, e-mail the current school advisory board president at timothy.

pratt@aviano.af.mil with your name, contact information, name and grade of your child currently enrolled at Aviano, and a short statement on why you are interested in serving. The deadline to submit nominations is Wednesday.

Tuition Assistance

The deadline to apply for Term V spouse tuition assistance is May 12. Spouses can pick up an application at the education center. For more information, call Ext. 5330.

Bazaar

The Primavera Bazaar is from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. May 12, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. May 13, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 14 in Hangars One and Two and the wash rack. The bazaar will feature more than 100 vendors, live entertainment and a "kiddie korner."

Commencement

Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 graduates from the Community College of the Air Force, on-base colleges and universities and those who earned a degree from an online institution will be honored at a commencement ceremony at 11 a.m. May 16 in the mass briefing facility. A reception will follow at the La Bella Vista Club. For more information, call the education center at Ext. 5330.

Commissioning

Airmen interested in a commission can attend a commissioning workshop at 9 a.m. May 19 in the education center.

Road work

The pavement markings in Area F are being repainted through May 25. The dates are subject to change due to weather and other circumstances. People must not park in coned areas. For more information, call Ext. 6018.

Honor guard

The Aviano Base Honor Guard is seeking sharp, dedicated and motivated people of all ranks who are willing to represent Aviano

at various events. For more information, call Tech. Sgt. Edward Sarmiento at Ext. 5611 or e-mail edward.sarmiento@aviano.af.mil.

Club scholarships

Air Force Services is conducting its annual club membership scholarship program. Six scholarships will be awarded, ranging from \$6,000 to \$2,500. Current club members and their family members who have been accepted by or enrolled in an accredited school for the Fall 2006 term as a part-time or full-time student are eligible to apply. Students may be working toward an undergraduate or graduate degree. Grandchildren are eligible if they are a dependent of the club member.

Entrants must provide a 500-word essay on the topic: "Proud to be an American." Each entry form must be accompanied by college proof of acceptance. All entries must be submitted to the La Bella Vista Club by July 14. Call Ext. 4303 for details.

Repair program

The Air Force Enhancement Repair Program is the place for regaining life and productivity from seemingly helpless equipment doomed for the trash bin. AFREP has the ability to repair a number of items from complex F-16 aircraft parts, to flightline support equipment, to office equipment. Due to scarce funds, all Air Force members benefit from using resources to keep equipment out of the dumpsters. Before throwing away electrical items, call AFREP at Ext. 8929.

For more information, visit them online at <https://avo-intranet/QualityAssurance/Goldflag/Goldflag.htm>.

Volunteers needed

Aviano Middle School needs volunteers for its fourth annual Patriot Games June 15. Those wishing to help may e-mail Cathryn Cline-Casillas at cathryn.cline-casillas@eu.dodea.edu. Volunteers will be notified by May 26.

Reel Times

Today, 7 p.m. - "Date Movie" Rated PG-13 - A hopeless romantic has finally met the man of her dreams. But before they can have their Big Fat Greek Wedding, they'll have to Meet the Parents and hook up with The Wedding Planner. Starring: Alyson Hannigan, Adam Campbell

Today, 10 p.m. - "V for Vendetta" Rated R - Set against the futuristic landscape of totalitarian Britain, a mild-mannered young woman is rescued from a life-and-death situation by a masked vigilante known only as "V." Starring: Natalie Portman, Hugo Weaving

Saturday, 7 p.m. - "Eight Below" Rated PG - Three members of a scientific expedition are forced to leave behind their team of beloved sled dogs due to a sudden accident and perilous weather conditions in Antarctica. Starring: Paul Walker, Jason Briggs

Sunday, 7 p.m. - "V for Vendetta" Rated R

Wednesday, 7 p.m. - "V for Vendetta" Rated R

Thursday, 7 p.m. - "Freedomland" Rated R - A white woman blames an African-American man for the death of her son, but a white reporter and an African-American detective think otherwise. Starring: Julianne Moore, Samuel L. Jackson

(Titles and times are courtesy of www.aafes.com, and are subject to change.)

Fly Bys

Upcoming festivals

- Taste asparagus delicacies during the asparagus festival each evening until Monday in Gorgo di Latisana.

- Experience Florence's largest art festival including music, drama and dance performances throughout May and June.

- Enjoy Caorle's flower festival from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

- Get a taste of spring at Porcia's Spring Festival from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The park of Villa Dolfin (near the Autostrada entrance in Porcia) will have a flower exhibition, crafts, music and entertainment. A wooden chair race takes place at 4:30 p.m. Sunday.

For more information on these festivals, call Ext. 7555.

Travel Web site

Americans with travel plans should visit <http://travel.state.gov> to get the latest travel advisories in Europe. Maintained by the U.S. Department of State, the Web site offers a list of places suspected of anti-American activity, as well as other information for travelers. Call the Office of Special Investigation at Ext. 7643 with questions about the site.

Painting

"Pio Semeghini e il Chiarismo," a painting exhibit is from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., through May 28 in medieval Mantua. Visit www.fondazionesemeghini.it for details.

Lake Bled offers nature, relaxation

By Senior Airman Sarah Gregory
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Although Lake Bled, Slovenia, is small, the town packs a lot of activities into its miniature size.

A town for all seasons, Lake Bled has things to do no matter when you go – skiing in the Julian Alps or skating on the frozen lake in the winter and hiking and swimming in the summer.

Whether driving or taking the train, getting to Lake Bled is easy. Drivers can take the A4 toward Trieste and follow the signs to Ljubljana and then Bled; all in all, it's about a three-hour drive from Aviano. Since the town is so small, those taking the train will have a short cab ride or walk, depending on hotel location.

Although Lake Bled can be enjoyed anytime, it's best to experience its charm during the off-peak season. May and June are best for warmer weather because it's nice enough to be outdoors without the large summer crowds that July and August bring. It's also easier to find a hotel room.

Hotels and penzionies are plentiful here and most are close to or actually on the lake. There are a few hotels that are similar to traditional western hotels, but it's Lake Bled's penzionies that offer some of the best deals and unique charm. Most penzionies include breakfast in the cost of the room – check online for individual deals.

Upon arriving, visitors can immediately see two interesting attractions – the tiny island in the lake center and the castle that towers over the town.

The island is home to a small baroque-style church with a bell tower, chapel, fountain and excavated graves. To get to the island, visitors must catch a ride, for €10 round-trip, from one of the many pletna boats that line the shores of the lake. A pletna is a wooden boat lined with benches and covered by canvas. The boat is controlled by one person, using a special rowing technique. Guests can take their turn ringing the church wishing bell, which is said to bring good luck.



Situated on the only island in Slovenia, the Church of Assumption offers visitors a chance for good luck with a ringing of its bell.

Lake Bled's other main attractions is Castle Bled which sits atop a rock cliff overlooking the town. There are several well-marked trails that lead to the top or people can drive up. Because of its lofty position, the castle has fantastic views of the countryside, and in the summer, hosts outdoor concerts within its compound walls. There is also a museum and an upscale restaurant with indoor and outdoor dining.

Other activities include hiking to Vintgar Gorge, which features a beautiful waterfall, or for the more indoors type, betting on luck at the classy casino in town. Hotel staff and the tourist office located on the main street in town can point people in the direction of both. If visiting the casino, remember to bring your passport or stateside license; casino policy requires guests to have a photo ID with an address.

Despite its small size, Lake Bled is home to a wide variety of restaurants, including several pubs, Italian and Chinese cuisine. Patrons don't need to worry about language barriers – menus are printed in Slovene, English, Italian and German and most hospitality staff speak English. The one local specialty to try is the cream cakes, which are a symbol of Bled. The rich vanilla custard pastry is best paired with a sweet dessert wine or cappuccino.

No matter what your interests, Lake Bled offers something for everyone. The only difficult thing is deciding what to do first.

Going places: Share a traveling experience! Submit stories or photos from your recent adventure at vigileer@aviano.af.mil.



Photo by Senior Airman Sarah Gregory

Lago di Barcis is located about 45 minutes from Aviano and can be found by following the signs from Maniago.

Information, Tickets and Tours

Upcoming tours from the Information, Tickets and Travel office include:

- Saturday - Shopping in Florence
- Saturday - Wine tasting in Friuli
- May 13 - Guided Trieste and Miramare Castle
- May 13 - Guided Salzburg and the Sound of Music Tour

ITT escorts ensure the group arrives and departs from destinations as sched-

uled and will do everything possible to make the trip safe and comfortable. Escorts also provide general information about the area. Please note weather conditions and dress accordingly for trips. The ITT staff recommends wearing comfortable shoes because almost all tours involve walking.

Call Ext. 5072 or 5026 for more information.

Going the distance with Pedalata

Organized bike rides offer Aviano members a chance to get out, explore the local area, socialize and have fun.

Courtesy of 31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Aviano members now have a way to explore the local area and get a bit of exercise at the same time with the Pedalata bike rides.

"A Pedalata is an organized bike ride, usually in conjunction with a town festival," said Amy Wells, a seven-year Pedalata veteran. "They are typically held on a Sunday morning and depart from the festival site around 9 a.m.," Mrs. Wells said.

Sign-ups for Pedalata participation are normally done at the event site an hour prior to departure. The cost for signing up is between €3 to €6 per participant.

The bike rides usually vary in length, from 20 to 40 kilometers, and travel through the surrounding towns and countryside on paved roads.

While 20 kilometers may seem daunting, Mrs. Wells said the event is designed for riders of all levels and ages.

"The ride is non-competitive and the pace is very easy to allow older folks as well as young children to participate," she said. "There is also a stop along the mid-point for rest and refreshments."

The Pedalata also takes the riders' safety into consideration.



People from all over the local community line up at Pedalata bike ride.

Bicyclists travel in a group along a traffic-controlled route that allows the participants to proceed in a safe and secure manner.

"Participants don't have to worry about breaking down or getting tired along the way," said Mrs. Wells. "The 'Scopa' truck can assist people in getting back on the road or transport riders and their bikes to the end of the course."

If bikers are injured along the way or meet with difficulty, an ambulance follows the group to assist.

At the end of the course, a pasta lunch is served to all participants and prizes are distributed. There are prizes for largest groups, largest families, youngest and oldest participants, most original bike, oldest bike, furthest distance traveled to get to the event, foreign participants, and prizes just for kids. In addition, there are also other prize drawings and raffles during the lunch.

Upcoming Pedalatas

May 14
Ecologica
Pedalata in
Sgonicco
May 14
Children's
Pedalata in
Pordenone
(10 Km)
May 21
Ecologica
Pedalata in
Urbana

Go fish: Outdoor rec hosts a fishing trip from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. May 21. Call Ext. 8623 for info.

Aviano flag football schedule

Monday

5:30 p.m. - 31st MDG vs. 603rd ACS
6:30 p.m. - 31st AMXS vs. 31st SFS Blue
Falcons
7:30 p.m. - 31st CES A team vs. 31st
MXS AGE

Tuesday

5:30 p.m. - 31st CS vs. Bravo Co.
6:30 p.m. - 31st LRS vs. 603rd ACS
7:30 p.m. - 31st MXS PMEL vs. 31st
SFS Blue Falcons

Wednesday

5:30 p.m. - 31st MDG vs. 31st OSS
6:30 p.m. - 31st MXS AGE vs. 31st CES
B team

7:30 p.m. - 31st AMXS vs. 31st MXG

Thursday

5:30 p.m. - MXS PMEL vs. 31st MXG
6:30 p.m. - 31st LRS vs. 31st OSS
7:30 p.m. - 31st MXS AGE vs. 31st SFS
Blue Falcons

May 15

5:30 p.m. - 31st MDG vs. 31st CES A
team
6:30 p.m. - Bravo Co. vs. 31st LRS
7:30 p.m. - 31st CS vs. 31st AMXS

*All games take place at the Dragon Fitness
Center football field.*

Fly Bys

Champions

Congratulations to the 603rd Air Control Squadron, Aviano's 2006 intramural volleyball champions. The 603rd ACS team beat out the 31st LRS team 2-0 to clinch their reign as the 2006 champions.

Baseball

Pony League baseball is for boys ages 15 to 18 who are not on an Aviano Youth Program league team. The team will play other American and some Italian teams. For more information, call Aaron Stauffer or John Hernandez at Ext. 4034.

Softball

Tryouts for the men's varsity softball team are Monday through May 15. Those interested may call Master Sgt. Ed Michaud at Ext. 1008 or e-mail him at edward.michaud@aviano.af.mil.

Umpires needed

Aviano Youth Programs is looking for umpires for youth baseball and softball. To volunteer or for more information, call Shalee Torrence at Ext. 4784 or e-mail shalee.torrence@aviano.af.mil.

Base softball team

The Aviano base softball team is looking for experienced players for all positions, especially pitchers. For more information about the team, call Staff Sgt. Valerie Gilbert at Ext. 8535.

Volksmarch

The Aviano Road Runners are participating in a Volksmarch at 8 a.m. Sunday. The group leaves the Bar Municipio in Roveredo and heads to Pordenone. For more information, call Ext. 7692 or 7404.

Golf

A free adult golf clinic is from 5:30 to 7 p.m. May 12 at the Alpine Golf Course. The course will provide all equipment. Call Ext. 7386 for details.

Aviano goes M.A.D. for safety

By Lt. Col. Todd Phinney
31st Fighter Wing chief of safety

As the 31st Fighter Wing Chief of Safety, I have been exposed to a variety of issues that really get my attention. The common theme among these issues is that all of them could result in our Airmen and/or our family members getting seriously injured, or worse.

I have spent a good deal of time working to boil this all down into the "lowest common denominator." My thought was that if I couldn't express it to the wing, I would be hard pressed to do anything about preventing these issues from happening.

Having gone through this mental process, three safety issues stand out above the others. This is not to say that other issues aren't important or don't warrant due vigilance. After reading countless safety reports, talking to our wing leadership and our Airmen, I feel certain that if we can control the following safety issues, our wing will be able to focus on our primary task – to defend our nation in a time of war.

Having been on the receiving end of countless messages, I knew that just telling the wing what these fundamental safety concerns are would run the risk of being forgotten. As one of our great forefathers, Benjamin Franklin, said, "Many complain of their memory, few of their judgment." So, we in safety came up with the following theme to help keep the topics solidly in your memory – "Go M.A.D. for Safety!"

"What does that mean," you say? I am glad you asked. M.A.D. is an acronym comprised of the following parts.

First, the "M" stands for major motor vehicle accidents, or MVA for short. A major accident is one in which someone is injured, a car is disabled (more than just a flat tire, etc.), or greater than \$10,000 damage has occurred. Back to the point – MVAs are one of those issues that really concerns me. The last fatality in our wing

and the majority of fatalities in our wing come as a result of MVAs. Would you believe me if I told you that last fiscal year our wing had 151 MVAs?

The "A" stands for Class A mishaps. A Class A mishap is a way of categorizing a fatality, a permanent total disability (such as paralysis), or the loss or damage of an asset costing \$1 million or more. Clearly, our goal should always be zero Class A mishaps. I can think of few things more crippling to our wing than to lose one of our own Airmen. Also, losing a valuable piece of equipment, such as one of our F-16s to a preventable mishap during this time of war would be a true waste of a national treasure.

Finally, the "D" stands for driving under the influence, or DUI. DUIs are particularly nasty because they can quickly lead to the "M" and the "A" above. In fiscal year 2005, our wing had 26 DUIs. So far this fiscal year, we have had 18 DUIs. Looking at the last 10 or so DUIs, nearly half of them have resulted in an MVA with substantial injuries. The drivers of these same DUIs have averaged over a .20 blood alcohol content.

I am grateful our Airmen have run into non-living stationary objects. Had one of these resulted in a head-on collision with an oncoming car, I know that lives could have been lost. Our commander, Brig. Gen. Robert Yates, has challenged the wing to have a DUI-free month in May. I feel we are up to the challenge. It is all about having a plan before drinking and sticking to it.

So there you have it. "Go M.A.D. for Safety!" is all about helping us remember to focus on reducing MVAs, having zero Class A mishaps and stopping DUIs in our great wing. Together, we need to foster a culture intolerant of unsafe practices. As individuals, we need to have the ability to step up and stop an unsafe series of events from spiraling into a tragic mishap. Each of us has the ability and responsibility to do so.



The Cornerstone

An indispensable and fundamental basis

The Cornerstone Page is devoted to those who support junior enlisted, NCOs, CGOs and spouses. It's to share advice, ideas and opinions dealing with life in the Air Force and Aviano. It's also a forum to recognize those around us. The Cornerstone Page will also offer Air Force trivia and facts.

Submission info: We want to hear from you. Flex your writing talents and share your thoughts with us and the community.

Commentaries: Writers can send commentaries to vigileer@aviano.af.mil. Commentaries must be 500 to 700 words. Topics must be applicable to the Air Force, Aviano and appeal to the general public. For questions or concerns, call the Vigileer at Ext. 7344.

Kudos: Aviano members can send congratulatory messages to Vigileer@aviano.af.mil. Messages can be submitted for appreciation, retirements, awards, good service, promotions and graduations. For questions or concerns, call the Vigileer at Ext. 7344.

Deadline: The deadline for submitting information is close of business Thursday one week prior to publication. Faxed articles will not be accepted by the staff. The public affairs office is in Bldg. 1360, Room 19.

Recognizing The World's Finest

• Congratulations to **Senior Master Sgt. Jose Lugo-Santiago**, 31st Maintenance Squadron, for his selection as a distinguished graduate of Senior NCO Academy Class 06-C. Distinguished graduates represent those students who rank in the top 10 percent of their class.

• Congratulations to **Tech. Sgt. Thomas Kelly**, 31st Operations Support Squadron, for being selected as a distinguished graduate of the NCO Academy.

• Congratulations to the Aviano Community Theater actors who recently won at the U.S. Air Forces in Europe's Topper's Awards. The following members took first for their performance and participation in Stephen Sondheim's "Into The Woods:" **Staff Sgt. Jason Smith**, 31st Communications Squadron, won for best sound, **Pam Hillestad** for set design, **Christy George** for makeup and stage props, **Capt. Summer Davis**, 31st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, for best military actress and **Staff Sgt. Joe Carrender**, 31st Maintenance Operations Squadron, for best actor.

• Congratulations to the following Airmen for their outstanding completion of their career development courses: **Airman 1st Class Jonathan Mills**, 603rd Air Control Squadron, **Airman 1st Class Micah Burgess**, 31st Civil Engineer Squadron and **Senior Airman Giovanni Garzona**, 31st CES.

• Hats off to the entire **31st Services Squadron** for their outstanding job at the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Services Program Awards. Aviano took top place in the golf, resource management, youth and school age programs and the library categories.